75

An ill individual made a preliminary self-diagnosis to ascertain which was the pertinent specialist to consult. A quick cure occurred if the diagnosis were correct, because the specialist then had the exact curing agent and magic for that disorder. If the first mɔ̄ were unsuccessful, the patient moved on without embarrassment to another. In fact, a person might be a-curing with 2 or 3 mɔ̄ at once, and a modern doctor besides (cf. Hauck, 1956:37):

> "She goes to Mɔ̄ Suk who is good for spirits, and to Mɔ̄ Plung at Lam Pakachet who is good for headaches and vomiting. Two years ago her child was sick with saan chak and was cured by Mɔ̄ Suk. First she took the child to Suk but a few days later went to Sawad at Lolae because she was afraid the child would die. Sawad gave tablets. She did not revisit either mɔ̄ because the child recovered. Mɔ̄ Suk helped most because he had experience in magic" (SS.).

[571] For reasons of convenience, however, people also developed lasting relationships with particular mɔ̄, usually the nearest, or a kinsman, to whom they turned first for medical help.

75. 826 Medicines cured either by direct rectification of deficiencies or excesses or on a principle of counter balance. Their effectiveness was increased by incantations. A rhinoceros in massive presence caused earth excess in the form of cholera (Bangkok Calendar, 1869:73), but a bit of its bone restored earth deficiency. Cobra was a direct ingredient for heat, but only sour tastes gave water element. A mɔ̄ described the medical theory behind curing techniques for the heat-rash, boils, and fever sometimes suffered after childbirth:

> "If the body is hot, fire is in excess, by which the other elements are heated. Thus the blood cannot move freely, and cells are deprived of their normal blood supply. The cells die, thus creating a boil or abcess. If the fire element is higher, the water of the body is lowered to a deficiency. Drinking water alone will not restore the water level. Sour tastes must be given. If the patient is thirsty, the lung is hot."

843
262

qualities of foods. Chili peppers were avoided because they "burned the baby's skin." The cooling kluai namwa banana ensured a cool-tempered child. The fact that one woman ate cobra curry and suffered heat, while another took it comfortably, indicated, however, that what was bad for one might not be bad for another. Individuality of constitutional make-up explains why views varied considerably on proper diet in pregnancy and lactation (cf. Hauck 1959:2,16). Those who were eying urban ways added to the variety by occasionally following modern medical advice. A schoolteacher, for instance, ate eggs regularly and during pregnancy----not the "old way."

Women were urged to eat a great deal for they were eating for 2.[29] Cravings were not compelling, but to increase food intake, preferences were indulged, even when involving out-of-season fruits, expensive, or "dangerous" items (Hauck, 1959:14).[30] "A pregnant woman can eat any kind of food because she is sailing on a tremendous ocean [a traditional phrasing, cf. Anuman Rajadhon:108)] No one can predict whether she will live or die. One wants to eat chicken and kills it herself. Another has dreams and nightmares about craving certain food." She who flouted the Buddhist prohibition on taking life and killed a chicken to eat was not criticised. She was shouldering

---

29. "To increase the appetite" was of frequent concern (cf. Hauck, 1959:27, and Sharp et al., 1953:256-260). Food in quantity and the appetite to consume it was one of the main props of social relationships and of personal security (L.M. Hanks, 1963). [571]

30. Some of the likes and dislikes mentioned turned out to be a recitation of the traditional food injunctions set down in the old "textbook," Promcindas, quoted by Phya Anuman Rajadhon (116). That fresh fish tastes and odors were the most frequent dislikes (Hauck, 1959:14) should be seen alongside the following "symptom of pregnancy sickness: if the mother desires to eat meat and fish and raw things----a creature of hell has come to be born" (ibid:116). Such an idea might well discourage the eating of fresh fish and underlie Yong Chutima's statement that "women were supposed to eat less meat than men" (quoted in Hauck, et al.,1958:42), and found as a prevalent attitude in Cha Chung Sao (H.M.H.). The out-of-season fruits, Chinese noodles (an expensive or party fare) and hot foods (dangerous) fit certain craving-categories of Obeyesekere (pp. 338-339).

1: Hanks E-5 (1953-1954) 1964 AO7 Central Thai AO7

Chapter V

BIRTH CUSTOMS: THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

829
591

Physiological ideas clarify only part of DŪan's tale. To illuminate other underlying tenets, we begin with the idea of help.

Help

[812]

In "Influences on Health" (p.27) it was pointed out that Bang Chan conceived of individuals as unique beings, each with his fate in his own hands, with no bonds nor responsibilities to any other being. In an earthly existence, though, it would be difficult to obtain satisfaction or even life itself under such separatist terms. What relationship was possible between such autonomous beings? How in fact was rebirth brought about? Help (chūai) was the fundamental principle for organizing social interaction. Without help, the villagers saw existence not only as lonely and ineffective but even unrealizable. With it, personal and mutual goals were achieved, and life was enriched. People were "independent agents serving each other because it is mutually beneficial" (Phillips:63).

Responsibility for initiating help lay formally with persons of greater age or higher status. Elders assisted juniors, government officials assisted peasants. They received in return gratitude, obedience, and respect. Parents received care in their old age from the children they had nurtured. In the ordinary walk of life, particularly in a household, though, aid took the form of a continuous give and take with associates. The view of help as the mainspring of social action cut through many a problem of initiating aid or waiting on another to act, for fundamentally, on the cosmic scene, all beings were equally old. The child who helped most by giving over his earnings was loved most by his parents (Phillips:89); when married, children helped their parents less than before marriage, still less if they cooked in separate kitchens in the same house, and much less when they moved to a separate house, for their time and cash went increasingly to maximize their own interests.

[593]

829
57
602

The genetic connections of those who did not help in cash, or labor at, say, cremations or cooperative work-parties were forgotten. Degree of help was a measure of kinship solidarity, and even marked the outer boundaries of kinship.

844
829
57
[842]

The word "help" turned up over and over again in the context of childbirth. Birth came about because a married couple, already steeped in the knowledge that they had been so helped by their parents, "helped another individual to new life" through the mingling of semen and blood. The midwife's role was merely to "help." When a woman engaged a midwife, her words were, "Will you come to help me?" A baby having trouble breathing right after delivery "had to be helped for half an hour." Most important, only through the reciprocal help of mother and child was rebirth to earthly life implemented at all. Parturition was an active, cooperative venture between 2 autonomous beings. The child set the time for labor to start by "deciding to be born" when his 32 parts were "complete,"[38] and he had worked off sufficient sin in purgatory to permit rebirth. The mother by her labor "helped the child to be born," but she could not succeed unless he actively "helped," too. Though other assistance to her was desirable, such as persons to support her back and press out the infant, only his help was essential. Without it she had a hard or unsuccessful labor. A woman who gave birth successfully without outside help created no stir because it was evident that the baby had been helpful.

844
[826]

794
84
[115
826]

38. Informants were not uniform in opinion here. Some said the khwan (or winyan) was the first "part" to establish itself--arriving at the moment of conception--others that it was the last (Textor:262). In either case it was highly volatile during pregnancy, and the trapping by winnowing at birth was the major means of rooting it in the person. During pregnancy, medicine for wind in the fetus was given "which was not effective if there were no khwan," but whether the khwan was the mother's or the child's was not certain.

844

greater, for relatives were at hand. Some of these ordinary persons developed skills of considerable consequence.

844
759

If difficulties developed, then a more experienced person, perferably a midwife, was needed. But many a midwife assisted at normal births. Because difficulties might arise from a deficiency of merit either in the mother or the child (one could never know which), many women preferred to have in attendance, for peace of mind, either a midwife or an experienced person to insure the presence of expert help. Sometimes they were engaged in advance, more often just sent for "as pain is increasing," it being not always certain whether the case was normal or not.

844
743
845
847

A few women were delivered at the Mīnburī Health Center. These were rarely normal cases. The Center was turned to as a last resort in dire circumstances, with the result that sometimes the woman died in the boat on the way. A few persons of rather more modern outlook, such as wealthy farmers, teachers, and traders, had been delivered there and recognized its usefulness.

759

The midwives lived in all parts of the community, with 3 in the populous central temple area. No one was more than a half-hour's paddle, or an hour's walk from the home of some midwife. What was desired, however, was a particular person, even though he might not be the most accessible one.

759
571
602

Since midwives were all heads of large families their clientele was mostly their kinsmen. They also took care of non-kin who lived in their locality. A daughter or other close relative who had married out would be attended wherever she was, if she did not return home for confinement.

In choosing a midwife, a parturient sought out not only skill but favored a kinsman over a non-kinsman, a close relative over a distant one, a near person over a far.[63] Occasionally, to sustain an image of progressiveness, social superiority or of wealth display, a midwife from outside Bang Chan was imported. Sometimes proximity, convenience, and

---

63. A male and 2 female kinsmen-midwives were called by the man's sister to deliver her, and all came. He did not deliver her because she was "too close a relative," but he said a brother "could deliver a sister."

759
59
602
184

affection overrode kinship.[64] Thus affinal relatives and non-kin neighbors were also requested to assist. Buddhists attended Muslims and vice-versa, (though Muslim women preferred female assistance).

609

In emergencies the professional midwives' area was the whole community. They travelled long distances to attend women who were not close kin. No parturient, however, even in an emergency, was ever attended by a complete stranger. In all likelihood, every adult in the community knew the midwives at least by sight.

759

As to the size of the practices, reported activities ranged from the Muslim midwife's estimate of 10 per year, down to 2 or 3 per year.[65] The 2 men and the most competent female midwife reported about 4 per year, a figure probably weighted on the side of the difficult cases per year. It is noteworthy that the men, in spite of being as we shall see both mǒ and midwife, did not have larger practices than the women. It was considered basically a woman's skill.

462

759
465

None of the midwives derived much income from their practices, nor did they expect it to be significant. Their main income came from rice-growing from which, however, the women and one of the males had largely retired because of age. The other male midwife was exceptionally busy as a labor contractor, builder of houses, land-owner. and headman as well. The midwives found the 5 to 30 baht offered

---

64. Two teachers who were in the kinship category of granddaughter (lān) to the 3 best midwives, and lived only a few hundred yards from them, were delivered by a woman who was mother-in-law to one and husband's older sister to the other and who was "not a midwife but knows how." Since labor was quick and normal, no higher help was necessary. On the other hand, all 3 of these midwives turned up to help at the confinement of another cherished "granddaughter." Only one of them actually delivered the infant but other functions were diplomatically divided up by the young mother.

65. Hauck studied 46 babies, aged up to 3 and so not all born in one year. Thirty-one were delivered by 4 of the professional female midwives (12,9,7,3 respectively); a male midwife and an "experienced" person had done 2 each; 11 women, one each (Hauck, 1959:61). A few of the latter 11 were ordinary kin, not midwives.

802
571

759
465

in the khwan khāo "gift" handy cash. The income was about 40 to 200 baht ($2.00 to $20.00) per year.

759
84

The duties of a midwife were not time consuming if all went well. There was practically no pre-natal care, and a few hours of care was given for only three days after birth. If complications arose, though, the midwife spent long hours away from home. In fact the husband of one midwife grumbled, "You don't receive anything, and just waste time. Sometimes you stay away over night, and no one watches the house or the children."

759
571

In their social role, midwives felt personal but not group solidarity. A solid bond existed between an older midwife and the particular younger one to whom he or she had given training and magic. Those related by blood or marriage sometimes worked together, and even turned over cases to each other if outside demands became pre-eminent. If in trouble on a case, midwives did not call on each other unless as close, affectionate relatives but turned rather for help from a mō or to the Minburī Health Center. Yet sometimes rivalry was severe. If the family of the parturient felt that no progress was being made with one midwife, they called in another and another. Each did his utmost and then stepped down when it had to be admitted, "My magic is not enough." The final expert who brought mother and baby through before the deposed midwives glowed inwardly with pride and skill and satisfaction that the magic of his particular teacher had proved effective. The sharpness of the competition reverberated through the words, "I pushed the other midwives down." Community standing or "face" was not lost by an unsuccessful case because of the midwives' fundamental role as helpers only, their faith in their own experiences, and again, the conviction that the course of childbirth was merit-determined.

[756]
[845]
[743]
[578]

759
554
152
789

759
554
572

Though living like other elder citizens of the community, in their social role they were more respected. Known as selfless donors of time and energy for the sake of others, whose successes gave proof of merit and nurturing capacity, they were viewed as assets to the community. In spite of competition considerable affection was evident between some. They were elders before a sea of youth, old friends who had for years lived and farmed side by side, met at ceremonies, and shared many experiences.

759

If the case were in difficulty sometimes a mō was called, sometimes a midwife or even both. What was the nature of their respective specialties? What in fact made certain midwives "professionals" (tham ăchīp [Mc.F. 990]) when others who had equal or more experience were not so considered?

759

established midwife who was a "close relative."

Sometimes the interest arose in young people. A girl started at 15 to accompany her mother, a midwife, as helper and delivered her first case alone (an emergency) at 20. A boy of 15 also helped his mother's sister, who was a midwife. Later, when married, he delivered some of his own children, but denied that he ever intended to take up the calling. One young man in his 30's, was seen going "as a team" with a well known old mɔ̄ who directed him in the manual operations but who did not ever touch the woman himself. He also assisted one of the female midwives, but had not yet delivered a baby alone.

759 571 602

The first child delivered by anyone was always the child of a close kin. Only with success at this first delivery would a person even consider doing it again. The second case, and the next few were confined to the potential midwife's close relatives, children (lūk), grandchildren, and the children of siblings (lān). Thus, the skills were validated within the kin circle before a midwife felt ready to practice outside.[69]

With success, a person of developing skill might be willing to include non-kin in his clientele, i.e. become a professional. One resolved only to help relatives but her "fame spread." As another said, "seeing it was safe, I was encouraged to go on." By this time, magical formulae had been

---

69. Daughters-in-law were within the validating circle if circumstances were "convenient"--i.e. if their own mothers did not deliver them and if they lived with their husband's people. No witchcraft was feared between women. A mɔ̄ in his specialty also had to validate his skills within his close kindred before non-kin would call on him. A reputation began at home.

[606] [764] [756]

759 sought, ritually requested of some relative who was a mid-
• 571 wife.[70] Some persons though continued to limit themselves
602 to delivering their relatives, and never sought magic at all.

Two Worlds: The Natural and the Supernatural

759 To deliver a baby as a midwife or even as an unskill-
772 ed kinsman, embraced 2 aspects: a manual or technical, and a magical. These aspects corresponded to Bang Chan's 2 great worlds of knowledge and experience: the natural and the supernatural.

Midwifery was not alone in embracing both of these categories. Every activity, bus-driving, dancing, printing, or other, had its incorporated magical means to augment the probability of success. Though with the manual or technical skills of the natural world alone one could come through all right with even a modicum of supernatural help, success was greater. No one wanted to take the responsibility and risks of "going it alone" especially when the resources of the supernatural world were so freely and easily accessible to everyone. At the very least, one could start an enterprise on Friday (Wan Suk: Happy Day). The closer an enterprise was to the margin of life and death, however, the larger the supernatural element. In farming, curing, and midwifery, for instance, the ritual component was strong.

[874] Since these 2 worlds were qualitatively different, each required a different method of learning. The supernatural world, immaterial, royal and sacred, was learned

---

[769] 70. Three women had recieved theirs from their mother, mother's mother, and mother's older brother, respectively. A retired midwife planned to give hers "to the daughter or grandchild ("lan":sex not specified) who was interested enough to ask for it." One man had received his from his father's father. Childbirth magic would hardly be a suitable topic of conversation between priests, but it might have been passed down there, too. The midwife whom one accompanied while learning probably was the source of one's magic. Women's magic was passed down the maternal line only, whereas men could get theirs both from kinsmen and at the temple.

178
844
846

are less eaten today because they are too expensive."

A slight trend towards depersonalization might be part of the aping of urban behavior, or idiosyncratic, or of more general significance.[76] The Minburi Health Center may have been used to avoid certain face-to-face situations. A woman whose labor was prolonged was taken there by her (male) midwife who had to get to a meeting. He preferred the impartiality of the Center to turning her over to another midwife. A woman took up the hot ashes container so "others would not have to wait on her." Another appeared to have obtained a midwife from outside the community rather than seek out someone inside and closer at hand. A very poor woman used no boiled water because of inadequate help in the household to prepare it. Whatever the circumstances of her social isolation, ordinarily kin or neighbors would have seen to it that this job was done. This episode too was watched by neighbors who commented that since her health remained good, boiling might be unnecessary. Finally, to advertise certain medicines, a firm handed out yan, the magically inscribed cloth, to suspend on the holy cord that surrounded the mother. This was a long way from the personally inscribed "yan" of old.

743
571
812

A final reason for the acceptance of change was the larger number of choices of behavior because of a broader horizon. Bang Chan had never been an isolated community, for pilgrimages and visiting through easy boat-travel had been for decades part of its life. Yet the growing number of literates, the establishment of bus and other transportation services to the city, the experience, for a few, of work in Bangkok or of military service in Korea, the continuous association with non-Thai, (Chinese, Muslims, a Cambodian, and now the Americans), and the now somewhat diversified economy of the community all led to the increased familiarity with other ways of doing things. Patterns of childbirth were already reflecting this awareness.

177

Unchanging in the scene at childbirth was the necessity of supernatural assistance, and heat to ripen and restore the mother.

---

76. I feel this evidence is slight, and set it down merely as a point for future observation.

APPENDIX

MUSLIM CUSTOMS IN BANG CHAN

The small Muslim minority in Bang Chan though maintaining its identity, lived scattered through every hamlet, with the heaviest concentration around the mosque at the southern edge of the village. The occasional inter-marriage of Buddhist and Muslim was eventually amicably adjusted to the community and the religion. Some Buddhists manifested a veiled hostility in calling the Muslims "stingy." One said, "Muslims have expensive medicine to induce abortion, after which they might kill the baby. A Buddhist would use this medicine to help deliver, but would not dare take life." The Muslim reputation as a source for powerful magic, especially for love and sorcery, bespeaks some edginess in the relations between the 2 ethnic groups, but Buddhists sometimes sought out the benefit of this magic.

In spite of these separatist tendencies, the Muslims were fully Thai citizens, and participated as equals with the Buddhists in the economic, political and much of the social life. The 2 groups were in many respects interdependent. The Muslims did not object to taking life, so acted as butchers for the Buddhists. Muslims were frequent patients of Buddhist mɔ̄, whether priests or lay. The only Muslim who did a little curing was the To Iman, head of the mosque, but few if any Buddhists came to him for cures. Because every mɔ̄ gave an annual ceremony of homage to his teacher attended by everyone who had benefited from those powers during the year, Muslims and Buddhists met amiably at several large feasts. These festivals were public displays, very competitive in feeling, of the success of the different mɔ̄. One became the largest of the village-wide festivities. Buddhist women attended the Muslim female midwife, teacher-rites, and vice versa. Buddhists and Muslims, especially the prominent families, attended each other's home ceremonies, such as weddings, tonsures, and that part of the ordination held in the home (the thaan khwan). Separate kitchens were established at large Buddhist ceremonies so that Muslims could safely adhere to their one dietary regulation, the avoidance of pork. No such arrangements had to be made at Muslim ceremonies for Buddhists had no food taboos, and loved Muslim cooking.

Midwifery was an area of frank, harmonious interchange, with midwives of either religion often attending women of the other. Buddhist male midwives were allowed by the Muslim husbands to attend their wives, though female attendance was preferred. Satisfaction was expressed by Buddhist women over

759 the slight differences in ministrations. "The Muslim mid-
795 wife massages more than the Buddhist." The women easily
844 entered into reciprocal courtesies. The Muslim woman knew
• 57 the steps in the Buddhist winnowing ceremony and performed
[852 them as desired. One Buddhist mother dispensed, however, with the winnowing "because the midwife was Muslim." A Buddhist woman made up the khwan khăo in the fashion specified by the Muslim midwife and participated in the latter's teacher-rite.

795 Certain fundamental ideas of the Muslims led to rein-
779 terpretations of familiar Buddhist terms and activities.
[774 "Khwan" referred to the soul, but with no implication of reincarnation. "Bun," meaning "merit" to the Buddhist,
[782 meant charitable giving in the sense of tithes, for Islam prescribed that a portion of one's income be given to the
[177 poor. On the other hand, the Muslims had taken over many Buddhist practices: for one, the acceptance of Buddhist holy water as a cure for spirit attack.

795 Completely Muslim was the stress on physical and
[783 moral purification as an objective of every rite, and
[304 conversely, the prevalence of the idea of defilement.
[764 "Circumcision is to cleanse the body before growing up," it was said. Muslim mortuary rites were elaborate procedures for purification. When a Muslim baby died, the Buddhist midwife said, "The body was cleaned before
[831 burial," implying thorough measures beyond his ordinary experience. Procreation was viewed as dangerous and
[834 contaminating. The behavior that hid sexual phenomena at the same time by constant prescriptions kept sexuality
[562 much more in mind. Muslims separated males from females, for example, at feasts. No Muslim male ever became a midwife.

795 The events surrounding childbirth illustrated the
843 differing viewpoints between Muslim and Buddhist. In the
844 seventh month of her pregnancy, a Muslim woman called on on her chosen midwife, and gave her a gift of betel pepper leaves and areca nut to assure her services (fāk
[273 thong: to deposit gold). On returning home, she went as fast as possible "to insure fast delivery." Since Muslims frowned on liquor, their medicines were made up of hot-tasting spices in hot water. Yet one Muslim mid-
795 wife prescribed large doses of liquor before and during
844 parturition. For labor and delivery, a Muslim was stricter about utilizing the privacy of the small enclosed room, if there were one, while in the Buddhist house-
[562 hold "it could be anywhere" in the house. Muslim men, except for husband, brother, or father, were excluded from the scene. The Muslim khwan khăo contained "7

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

a loosely defined, laterally oriented kindred; the nation-state (mentioned not for formal reasons, but because it actually is psychologically important); and to a lesser extent, the village monastery and school. Of these five institutions, the nuclear family is the principal focus of psychological concern, beyond the individual himself. Otherwise, there are in Bang Chan no castes, age-grade societies, occupational groups (other than the family), neighborhood groups, or groups expressive of village solidarity (such as councils or governing boards) which might impose a sense of obligation on the villagers, or to whose norms or functions the villagers might have to conform.[6] Bang Chaners do not have to contribute their labor to their community, serve as village guards, contend with the dictates of village elders, or even actively coöperate with fellow villagers.

All villagers have additional relationships of varying degrees of intimacy both within and without the community, but these are dyadic, not group, relationships based on implicit expectations of mutual benefit. Such contacts are in nature primarily idiosyncratic (friends), transient (reciprocal work groups, gambling and drinking partners), or contractual (as opposed to affective or kin determined: vendors, landlords, debtors, rice millers, employers, and doctors). It is important to recognize that if some of these latter relationships take on positive affective qualities, they may also assume some of the forms and feelings of kinship. Thus, a young man who is taken on as a hired hand by a family frequently ceases to be considered an "employee" and becomes instead an "adopted son." (This type of *gemeinschaft* relationship, contrary perhaps to theoretical expectations, is also characteristic of many occupational situations in Bangkok.) In a similar vein, the terms for older sibling (*phii*), elder uncle (*lung*), and elder aunt (*paa*) are used as terms of address and reference between individuals who are obviously not related to each other, but who wish to mark overtly their fondness and respect for one another. The use of these

[6] There are two minor exceptions to this generalization: (1) a monastery lay committee whose functions are limited to the secular tasks of monastery administration, and membership in which brings prestige and Buddhist merit to a few selected members of the community; and (2) reciprocal work groups organized for and limited to rice transplanting and harvesting, membership in which is completely voluntary and a matter of mutual convenience (Jankkha 1955). Careful accounts are kept as to how much labor is contributed by each participating family, and responsibility for remitting labor received lies with the individual participant, not the group.

It must be noted that the monastery and its cadre of relatively permanent monks, although the very institution that defines the existence of "the village of Bang Chan," is not from the point of view of its clientele primarily a unit representative of village cohesiveness. It is first and foremost a Buddhist monastery where one may make merit and only secondarily *the Bang Chan* Monastery. Several members of the community patronize other monasteries, and several Bang Chan monks come from other locales. The keen sense of individual obligation that villagers feel toward their monastery could be directed toward any monastery.

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

fictive terms is of course sometimes prompted by nothing more than the desire to be polite, but equally often it symbolizes genuine feelings of affection and obligation not too different from what the terms imply when they are used in their original kinship context. Bang Chaners have a wonderfully convenient term, *phyan-yaad*, a compound meaning literally "family friends," which is used to refer both to friends to whom ego feels so close that he considers them members of his family and to individuals whom he considers his friends *because* they are members of his family. The particular persons to whom this term, as well as those noted above, is applied vary widely from informant to informant (expectedly so because they are non-institutionalized terms). However, the point to be emphasized is that for all villagers kinship provides a basic referential mechanism for expressing the degree of psychological affiliation that they feel toward other human beings.

An *awareness* of degrees of psychological affiliation and obligation and of the modes for expressing such sentiments are very much a part of village life. For with the exception of the five institutions mentioned above, most Bang Chaners, as I have noted elsewhere (Sharp *et al.* 1956: 241), are really not obliged—and do not feel obliged—to be beholden to anyone but themselves. In a very real sense, the village is comprised of 1,771 individualists whose major goals in life are to obtain sufficient land to support themselves, their growing children, and their religion, free from physical insecurities and unencumbered by entangling social obligations. When they enter into relationships with other people they do so with an awareness that they are always acting of their own free will.

Despite the conventions of ethnographic reporting, it is difficult to delimit the precise nature of the nuclear family in Bang Chan. The nuclear family clearly is the ideal for all villagers, but because Bang Chaners are just as responsive to convenience as they are to custom, there is considerable variation regarding this ideal. In his study of the economy of the village, Janlekha (1955) found it necessary to distinguish five different kinds of functioning, mutually exclusive household units in Bang Chan: the typical nuclear family (59.4 percent of all households); a limited extended family, consisting of a man, wife, either or both their sets of parents, and unmarried children (8.1 percent); an extended family, consisting of the limited extended family plus married children, the latters' children, and any collateral relatives of any generation (26.8 percent); a one-person family (5.4 percent); and the ecclesiastical "family," consisting of the order of Buddhist monks, the only truly corporate group in the village (0.3 percent). (These variations of the nuclear family, all localized groups, should of course not be confused with what I, following Sharp [1957], have been calling the kindred, with what Kaufman [1960] refers to as spatially and

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

As the reader might by now suspect, it is not easy to determine the basis of the unity of the family. However, of all the factors that keep people living together in amity and affection, two come to the fore: a sense of love, obligation, and respect that is derived from the simple fact of kinship, but which must be continuously confirmed by mutual benefits; and economic considerations.

The economic foundation of the family is significant not only because the family is in fact the sole economic and occupational unit in the community (with the exception of the monkhood and school) but because the villagers themselves think of the family in terms of its economic functions. People say that they marry for wealth or because of the productive capacities of their spouses;[13] spouses stay together because the economic costs of a split are too great; most important of all, people are keenly *aware* of their economic interdependence. Fathers say that they need children to work in the fields and care for the buffalos, that a family needs a mother so that its members will be fed, that siblings are useful because it is easy to borrow from them (although, as noted earlier, some are unhappy about the intrusion of the kinship tie into what they regard to be a commercial transaction). Many villagers extend this economic, transactional type of thinking to other aspects of the kinship relationship. Thus they say that "the purpose of marriage is to have a companion who will take care of you when you get sick," or very frequently that "my parents went to the trouble of bringing me up so they would have a person to make merit for them when they die." The emphasis here is on independent agents serving each other because it is mutually beneficial.

The love and affection that people feel for each other is of course grounded in the close associations that one finds in most nuclear families. However, the attitudes of respect that one sees are perhaps more distinctively Thai. Almost all the literature on Thailand refers, at one point or another, to the patterns of respect (*khwaamnabthyy*) existing between people, both within and without the family. These patterns are based, in the first instance, on the status inequalities that exist in almost all social

---

[13] In responding to the unstructured Sentence Completion Test item, "*He* (she) *wants to get a wife* (*husband*) *who. . . .*," for example, thirty-one of sixty informants indicated that they wanted a mate who "was a good worker," "earned a living," "was rich," or otherwise had high socio-economic status. Only two persons said that they wanted a spouse for reasons that could be reasonably defined as sentimental: one woman wanted a husband who "would be a good friend with whom she could discuss things," and a man said he wanted a wife whom "he loved." Other informants gave completions distributed among a variety of categories: "polite, well-mannered, handsome, kind, strong, and good" spouses; and six women wanted husbands who would be faithful.

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

relationships: within the family, usually in terms of the relative ages of people; elsewhere, in terms of age, wealth, power, knowledge, religious or governmental role. Secondly, they are based on the assumption that every individual, regardless of his position in the hierarchy, deserves respect. The first is a respect associated with the proper performance of one's role; the second, a recognition of the essential dignity of every human being.

The role of these respect patterns cannot be emphasized enough. Benedict, in her study (1946) of Thai culture at a distance, referred to the learning of the *waj*, or gesture of obeisance, as "the first teaching the child receives." Although the *waj* is perhaps not the very first social act the child learns, I have seen infants no more than two weeks old being guided by the mother in raising the palms of their little hands to the forehead in expression of deference to superiors. The older infant who can do this on his own almost always receives acknowledgments of approval and delight from the adults in attendance. An older sibling really means it when he says of his relationship with his younger brothers, "when I ask them to do some kind of work, they go and do it. They never disobey, and when there is no disobedience, there is no hatred. . . . Formerly, whenever there was entertainment somewhere I took them with me. My younger siblings love me a lot. . . ." His position in the authority structure assumes the respect of those younger than he, and they willingly grant it for, among other things, he plays his role well as the kindly superior who takes them with him whenever there is entertainment. All the polite little linguistic forms (honorifics, expletives suggesting status and, most important, ordinary kinship terminology with its specification of relative age) as well as kinesthetic forms (lowering the body while passing a seated older person, holding the younger between one's legs and with arms around him in a position of protection) also serve to emphasize the respect that people grant one another because of their differential status. Perhaps the most revealing illustration of the strength of these patterns, at least the authority pattern, was provided by a two-year-old toddler who pointed to the stomach of his pregnant mother and said with pride, "My younger sibling is in there. When he is born he will be *my* responsibility." Little doubt that when the child is born he will give his older brother his due.

With regard to the other respect form, recognizing the dignity of every human being, more than once I have heard parents say that they disliked giving their child a certain medicine "because it offends the baby; he does not like it. It is better not to give it to him than to hurt his feelings." Although I do not doubt that in some instances the parents were annoyed more by the screams of the child than anything else, I am also convinced that for the most part they were respecting his basic individuality and right

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

harvest time, serve to create a rite of intensification as family members decide together what work will be done by whom, arise early in the morning to work together happily in the fields—sometimes for as long as fourteen hours at a stretch—and actually see the fruits of their coöperative labor mount up on the threshing floors. The sense of familial solidarity and intradependence, and its associated feelings of love, is experienced by all.[16] Also, since harvesting more often than not involves working reciprocally with other families, the host of a reciprocal labor group giving a feast whenever possible at the end of the day, it serves, although to a lesser extent, to intensify feelings of membership in the larger community.

Summary

In my discussion of the "cultural background," I have dwelt primarily on kinship because the family is functionally the most significant social unit in the village and because it is within the context of kinship that personality is developed and, in Bang Chan, most frequently expressed. None of this is meant to imply a lack of importance for other social units—the monastery, the school, the state—or for the non-institutionalized relationships—friends, drinking partners, and business contacts. However, kinship does provide the basic psychological model for all human relationships in Bang Chan,

[16] Although the annual cycle of Thai peasants is described in detail in the available ethnographies on Thai rural life (deYoung 1955, Fraser 1960, Kaufman 1960, Kingshill 1960, Sharp *et al.* 1953) a few words should be added about the psychological dimensions of this cycle. Thus familial solidarity, intradependence, and love are not the only sentiments that are heightened during the harvest period. Perhaps the most striking quality of this season (December to January) is the increase in the optimism, joy, and general psychic well-being of the villagers: people laugh more loudly than usual; they relish telling about the things they are going to buy; parents take more kindly to the gallivanting of the children. These months contrast with transplanting time (late July to early August) and the period prior to harvest (October to November), when an overabundance of rain can destroy the villagers' rice seedlings or their entire crop. These latter periods are marked not so much by anxiety as by a sense of watchful waiting. All these contrast with the Dry season when things are especially quiet in Bang Chan and when villagers spend their time repairing farming equipment and houses, gossiping, or are working on jobs outside the community. Villagers say that of the three major seasons of the year (Dry, February to June; Rainy, June to January; Cold, January to February) they like the Rainy season best. The season coincides with the rice-growing cycle, is marked by Buddhist Lent and, excepting a final week of Monsoon downpour, is in fact the most comfortable period of the year.

These seasonal activities and attitudes also have direct implications for field work. Thus, while villagers gave freely of their time during the dry season and after the harvest, and during the latter were especially outgoing and benign, many simply would not see me during the weeks of planting and harvesting. The benign attitudes of villagers interviewed after the harvest were reflected directly in the data, as were the noncommittal responses of some villagers who were interviewed during transplanting time.

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

114 as do rejected lovers who fear suffering again. Without strong bonds,
*157 they develop no sense of guilt for those they injure and stand ultimately
156 responsible only to themselves, individuals among individuals who differ mainly in the amount of influence they wield. Thus Dang [the informant] can make demands of others but feels little obligation toward them. As he left his father and uncle with scarcely a second thought, so others can leave him. Of course, as was indicated by Dang's projective test data, this form of individualism is not entirely without its psychic toll. But on the level of action and conscious decision, the moral for a Thai runs: invest not thy love in a shadow.

114 The piece by this writer (Phillips, 1959) is essentially an amplification
*156 of some of the findings of the above paper and a confirmation, in the life
155 histories of two other informants, of their typicality. The paper was con-
866 fined to an examination of the development and expression of the needs for dependence and independence in the lives of these villagers. Three major points emerged from the analysis. First, the most common expression of dependence was in the area of subsistence and economics, in the individual's desire to attach himself to others who would give him sustenance in return for services rendered. Over and over again, the informants viewed their relationships with other people, particularly kin, in terms of the others' economic value to themselves. However, this mode of dependence was not so much an overriding compulsion as it was a basic postulate about human relationships: the measure of another person's love was explicitly
[581] the degree to which in material terms he served the self. The second point, in contrast to the above, was that marriage was seen as the means by which a person could free himself from the obligations of economic dependence. This freedom has two aspects: freedom from the frustrations caused by others; and freedom to set oneself up as master of one's own household, thus reaping the psychological satisfactions—status, power, and prestige—of having others dependent on oneself. The third and perhaps most striking point concerned the fact that all these informants spent their childhoods being shuttled from one family to another. Although this experience may not have been culturally modal, it occurred with sufficient frequency to be a possibility for every Bang Chan child. It was further suggested that in
[571] part such experiences taught villagers at a very early age that they had to fend for themselves, and that the experiences served as psychological prototypes for the sense of fragility of social relationships that is so characteristic of village life.

114 In contrast to most of the literature cited above, the last two articles are
124 based on data which are products of interviews heavily weighted toward the psychologically expressive. Two of the informants admitted that they told us things that they had never shared with anyone, and the agitation (a

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

achievement, and dependency, or by discussing those traits which are significant in the daily round of life, irrespective of the analytic categories to which they refer. In this section we will emphasize the latter, more naturalistic approach. Its advantage is that it permits us to identify and develop certain issues which play a crucial role in the interactive world of the villagers, but which might otherwise go unnoticed should they not be represented by, or not quite fit, any of the predetermined categories. The Thai attitudes toward the body referred to earlier, for example, is an issue of extreme importance in their interpersonal relationships, but one that is actually given little explicit attention in most personality studies. This section is designed in part to deal with such problems, although inevitably there may be some overlap between the materials covered here and those discussed in later sections.

The Pleasures of Social Contact

Of all the personality traits that come to the attention of the foreign observer there is perhaps none more compelling than the affability, gentleness, and good humor of the villagers. It is difficult to think of a people more consistently ready, *once contact has been made,* to treat others amicably and convivially than the peasants of Bang Chan. (The italics are necessary simply because the villagers are equally primed to ignore others.) However, this jovial cordiality is not an easy thing to conceptualize. In the earlier paper by Hanks and Phillips (1961) we spoke of these happy characteristics as "not so much the expressions of any basic lightheartedness as they are techniques for implementing the main precept of social interaction: 'Avoid face-to-face conflict!'" Although the villagers' good humor does serve this purpose, I would now suggest that it involves several additional dimensions and motives.

First, there is a whole complex of responses represented here. The tendency to keep situations and conversations jocular, amusing, and at times gently ribald, is perhaps the most relaxed expression of this attitude. It is most obvious in the behavior of village gossip groups and in the relationships between individuals who consider themselves acquaintances but not quite close friends. The essential ingredient of this mode of affability is that interaction should be a great deal of fun but of little social consequence. Of a different order, and more common, is the villagers' ubiquitous politeness. This takes a host of forms: the genial hospitality that is expressed toward a newcomer, usually in the form of "personal" questions serving both to identify the person and to make him feel that others are interested in him ("How old are you? Any children? How much did you pay for your shirt or your land? Why don't you have any children?"); the numerous linguistic

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

and postural forms expressive of respect cited earlier; the repeated hesitation to place others in embarrassing situations; the hesitation to tell others bad news so that "they will not feel sad" or will not have to dissemble (although more often the less delicate reason is the person's fear of embarrassing himself). Of a still different order is the uneasy affability that is expressed in the nervous giggling accompanying many face-to-face relationships and in the compulsive preoccupation with inconsequential or inoffensive topics while conversing with others. These responses appear to be either attempts to maintain minimal contact with others while jockeying to find out what they are really up to, or, in the negative sense, efforts to fulfill the minimum requirements of interaction while waiting (and hoping) for the contact to come to an end. And still different from all these is the affability associated with trying to make a good impression on others expressed in the constant concern with displaying good manners, with using pleasing or flattering words, with being a good host, and the like. Although this category is in many respects behaviorally similar to the "politeness" referred to above, it seems to differ from the latter motivationally in that it is concerned not with the state and comfort of others *per se*, but with ego's effect on others.

As described above in simple summary terms, these responses might appear quite ordinary and at certain times applicable to any group of human beings. However, what impresses the observer in Bang Chan is the insistence and constancy of their use. These are precisely the forms that the villagers choose in the vast majority of situations for expressing the degree and quality of contact that they feel toward others. That they are in fact social forms—stylized, often ritualized, modes of behaving—should not be overlooked. It is just this characteristic that engenders the theme underlying all the responses and which indeed sets the tone of most Thai interaction: that the relations between people should be friendly, genial, and correct, but need have little personal commitment or involvement. As will be seen below, it is this readiness to phrase most face-to-face contact in terms of social rituals while at the same time feeling little commitment to others that actually lies at the root of what has so often been called Thailand's "loosely structured social system."

Social Play

The first response mentioned above, the tendency to turn social situations into occasions for play, is probably one of the most common of all human tendencies (it is certainly one of the earliest), but one that strangely has received little attention in the psychological literature. The few writers who have expressed any interest in social play have tended to view it simply

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

571 as a release mechanism from boredom or tension (Riesman and Bloomberg
154 1957, Roy 1959–1960), as a "healthy" escape from reality (Flugel 1954,
52 Bateson 1954), or as a normal and desirable regression to childhood pleasures (Freud 1905 and 1928). Running through all these observations is the obvious Western bias that play somehow is divorced from, or a reaction to, the harsh facts of social reality.[8] On reflection, however, it is clear there is no theoretical necessity, either maturational or social psychological, for play to be limited to cathartic functions, or for regarding it as a less realistic or less mature psychological state than that which causes boredom, tension, escape, or regression. In fact, one might logically argue that the conditions which create the latter states are less realistic and immature because they represent retreats to forms of infantile masochism. Such questions of course belong to the realm of interpretive debate. The essential point is that in the process of learning to adapt to the social psychological realities of one's culture there is no inherent, ontogenetic requirement (other than that imposed by the peculiarities of one's culture) for human beings to renounce their motivations for play. Simply stated, having fun need not be so much a retreat from or defense against adult reality and responsibility as it is something to be sought after for its own sake.

121 The fundamental analytic issue here may well be whether play is a
154 psychobiological "given" of the human animal, on the same order as
52 hunger, sex, and other precultural needs, or a learned, secondary cultural

[8] Of these various interpretations, the most broadly conceived and carefully argued is Freud's, where play activities are linked theoretically to the interrelationships of the id, ego, and superego and the aims of the "pleasure principle." However, even here Freud was caught up in the Western cultural bias that only children, those who have not yet had to come fully to terms with social reality, could easily "afford" the luxury of play. This same cultural bias often appears at a totally different interpretive level in the rather crass pronouncements of journalists and travelers who, in writing about the Thai, refer to the "child-like" behavior of these people who spend so much time, energy, and money in having fun.

(114)

Radcliffe-Brown's famous essay on the "joking relationship" (1952) is of course a special sociological case of the "tension release" function of play. In a brief paper, Keesing (1960) lists some seven overlapping functions of play, but here too play is seen largely as divorced from "everyday 'reality' activities." Callois (1958) brings together valuable cross-cultural data in what is otherwise a classification of organized games.

Probably the most comprehensive study of play ever written is *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (1938; English translation 1950) by the late cultural historian, Johan Huizinga. Although Huizinga is concerned mainly with structured play activities (games of skill, chance, guessing games) and with the relationships between play and ceremonials, one of his observations is worth noting: "Nature, so our reasoning mind tells us, could just as easily given her children all those useful functions of discharging superabundant energy, of relaxing after exertion, of training for the demands of life, of compensating for unfulfilled longings, etc., in the form of purely mechanical exercises and reactions. But no, she gave us play, with its tension, its mirth, and its fun. Now this last element, the *fun* of playing, resists all analysis, all logical interpretation. As a concept, it cannot be reduced to any other mental category. . . ."

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

need. The problem is that we really do not know, although comparative data from primatology (Yerkes 1943, Kroeber 1948: 27–29 and 60–61) clearly suggest that play belongs to the former category. If this is indeed the case it would imply that play is subject to the same degree of cultural influence, channeling, and socialization as are hunger, sex, and aggression, but can no more be fully obliterated than can these needs. Assuming, for the sake of argument, that this reasoning is correct, then the compensatory "escape" and "regressive" functions attributed to play by the authors noted above would not be at all unreasonable: play might well come to serve as an escape from adult reality in the same way that food sometimes serves as an escape from sexual anxiety or sex from food anxiety (Holmberg 1950). However, the point is that these are not the primary or typical functions of these needs, but secondary and defensive ones; although significant, they hardly comprise the necessary conditions for their being. If this approach is valid, we would be considerably wiser in our present state of knowledge (the Protestant Ethic and its intellectual extensions notwithstanding) to direct our attention to identifying the varying forms of play from culture to culture rather than to dwell on its secondary, compensatory functions.

Whatever its ultimate motivational basis, there is no doubting either the spontaneity or ingenuousness with which Bang Chaners turn social situations into occasions for play. For the most part they seem prompted in these situations by the simple desire to have a good time rather than to affect others in a socially pointed way, that is, their humor is not typically aimed at being sarcastic, didactic, or even exhibitionistic, although the person who excels at being funny is quickly recognized as such and is to an extent admired.[7] There is, in the negative sense noted earlier, an element of interpersonal effect operating here: comedy is a technique which almost by definition reduces the potentiality for face-to-face conflict. However, the villagers' play seems aimed primarily at satisfying personalistic function: their *individual* needs for pleasure and amusement.

The forms that these play activities take are numerous.[8] Perhaps their

[7] In the more explicitly institutionalized forms of comedy—*likee* (folk dramatic shows) or newspaper and magazine cartoons—these aims do come into play and often assume extreme, sometimes even biting, proportions. However, this is the comparatively safe world of theatre and "literature." Among themselves, in the world of face-to-face contact, villagers are considerably more gentle (or less sophisticated) and do not focus explicitly on such purposes.

[8] We will be concerned primarily with the forms of play, not its content. For whatever reason, humor and comedy seem to be the last refuge of what is genuinely private in a culture. Intercultural translations may succeed in communicating the manifest content of another people's humor, but they so frequently miss its intent that the result is either perplexity or disappointment ("Yes, and what happens then?").

The dangers of trying to share humor interculturally were perhaps never brought home better than when I tried to get the villagers' reaction to a story that received

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

571 522 524 most subtle expression is in the marvelous word games that the villagers play. What is striking about these games from an analytic viewpoint is not so much that they are funny, but that villagers are continually attentive to opportunities for playing them, and actively try to structure situations along such lines. In a sense, they are not "games" at all but verbal asides that emerge spontaneously from the discourse of everyday contact, and which serve to make such contacts enjoyable. One form of word play is particularly popular. For the lack of a better term, it could be called "silent stinky pinky."[9] Here two persons are chatting, and person A works into the conversation a statement that sounds completely innocuous. (A man, for example, says to a woman, *hen mii*, meaning "see the bear.") Person B, forever attentive, knows that words are deceptive: although A *said* one thing, he was really *thinking* of, and expects B to be *thinking* of, its rhymed phonemic inversion, which is vulgar or insulting. (Although the man said to her, *hen mii*, he was really thinking of *men hii*, meaning "your vulva smells.") Person B picks up the cue and responds with a statement that sounds equally innocuous but which when mentally inverted is just as scatological. The game continues until one of the parties gives up, whereupon the conversation returns with laughter to its original concerns. It must be emphasized that although this game is phrased in terms of a verbal contest, its purpose is not to best the other person but to work out with him or her a dialogue entertaining to both.

524 522 123 Sometimes these games arise and die out so quickly that it is difficult even for other, nonparticipating Siamese to spot them. The particular example cited here is one that has become almost part of the folklore of conversational gambits. However, what delights many of the villagers is the unpredictability of these patterns. On one occasion, I unwittingly juxtaposed a few English phonemes that had two informants and my assistant literally rolling on the floor with laughter. We were talking about the

---

[123] [571] [522] wide currency in Bangkok newspapers during 1956. It seemed that a husband was waiting outside a brothel to escort his wife, one of the prostitutes, home. She was busy with a customer. The husband called to her, telling her to hurry. She called back, saying that she would be through shortly. A few minutes later, he called again, and once more she said that she would be coming along. Finally, the husband went in and shot both his wife and her customer "because I lost my patience." When I told this story to several villagers, I was the only one who chortled. Most of them either commented on the sadness of the story or said the husband was stupid for killing the family breadwinner.

[9] In American stinky-pinky, people try to guess the rhymed equivalents of abstract definitions. Thus, if person A says, "I am thinking of a 'cadaverous Marxist,'" person B might say, "a dead red." The Thai version differs from its American cousin in that it is not only unspoken but is not really a parlor game. The tonal, monosyllabic nature of the Thai language probably is an important preconditioning factor here. (See also Haas 1951 and 1957 for illustrations of other kinds of verbal play.)

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

salient: the free food, drink, and chitchat at the end of a hard day's work; the fun of working together with several other individuals. Notice that in this kind of situation there is no overseer demanding the person's effort. His labor is freely given and may be freely withdrawn.

In describing *sanug* as a measure of how much villagers wish to commit themselves to a particular activity, I mean to communicate a point and not merely to turn a phrase. The word "commit," which appears often in this book, is used to convey the idea that coöperative, mutually expectable interaction as we know it in the West does not "simply take place" in Bang Chan. Rather, there is always the intervening factor of whether individuals want it to take place. Siamese are, first and foremost, free and independent souls. Much of the time they fulfill each other's expectations, but this is only because they want to, not because others expect it of them or because the situation demands it. It is the individual that is primary, not the social relationship. The strength of this principle is demonstrated by the fact that one is almost never surprised when one's expectations about another are not fulfilled. The assumption is: "If he did not do it, he must have had his own good reason."

The potentialities for interpersonal frustration that are inherent in such a system are minimized largely by the hesitation on the part of individuals to build up strong expectations about people or events. In general, the Thai are a people who do not live at, and rarely reach, a high emotional pitch. Witness, for example, the specifications of "sanug-ful activities," those which afford the greatest pleasure: they are novel, diverting, comfortable, and frivolous, but there is no Faustian intensity about these joys. They are all rather muted emotional experiences. The point here is simply that in this kind of psychological environment, people rarely permit themselves to become *so* committed to an activity or to another person that the frustration of that commitment will be overly disturbing to them. They proceed from a premise which says in effect: "Well, it is really not that important that he did not do what I expected of him. I will simply have to make do."

There are a few aspects of the villagers' concern with *sanug* that warrant underscoring. First, from an analytic point of view, *sanug* seems to reflect an attempt on the part of the villagers to lead a psychologically integrated life, wherein the time and energy one gives to an activity is rewarded immediately and directly with pleasure. This low-keyed pleasure should be an inextricable part of the total situation in which one finds oneself (or more accurately, into which one places oneself), not something to be deferred until a later, "more appropriate" time when it becomes an isolated segment of experience. Essentially, *sanug* should be—it not always is—a concurrent aspect of almost everything that one does. At the same time, however, these conditions are also the source of an inevitable paradox. Since "sanug-ful" activities are, by definition, novel and diverting, and

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

front, know that it actually elicits and betrays his anxiety, but have such implicit trust in his own resources that he feels no need to alter his behavior. Simply stated: uneasiness when it occurs is accepted as a social psychological fact of life; it is not felt as a threat to the integrity of the personality.

The actual expressions of nervousness and inconsequential conversation vary considerably. Perhaps their most obvious (and justifiable) expression is when a villager, who wants to get something from another person, for example, a job, a loan, higher rent on land, is uncertain about the other's reaction and approaches him by hedging around the issue with giggles and light, irrelevant comments. This mode of behavior typically occurs when there is no history of reciprocal benefits between the parties or when a middleman cannot be used.[17] Although villagers themselves do not consider such comments "irrelevant" (probably because from a ritualistic point of view they are not), it is hard to define a detailed discussion of a person's buttons or belt buckle as anything but a kind of phatic communion. Sometimes conversations of this type will go on for twenty and thirty minutes, often branching off to include more topical interests such as the size of eggs or the calls of birds, before reaching the point. Frequently they never reach the point, since somewhere along the line the individual recognizes from the tone of the conversation that the other person is not in the proper mood to entertain his request; in this case, the individual will explain that he came simply "to chat." Sometimes the friend will begin to giggle uneasily (particularly if the protagonist's references to him contain an excess of flattery) as he becomes aware of the purpose of the conversation and wishes to evade facing the ultimate issue. Very often, even when the final request comes out, he can avoid it simply by giggling. Under such circumstances a giggle is crucially communicative: it is the person's polite substitute for "No," or "Let us bring this particular topic of conversation to an end." Giggling is a wonderfully effective way of carrying on a "conversation" (for those who can read its "vocabulary") because one can so readily convey his refusal, wariness, and even hostility while at all times maintaining the illusion of friendliness. It is precisely because the villagers' giggling frequently rests on such devious attitudes that it appears

[17] The *quid pro quo* basis of the former would permit a considerably more direct approach. It is not difficult to be frank with a person when both you and he realize that you are asking for an earlier obligation to be repaid or that you are creating a new one which may be called upon later when needed. Villagers are highly responsive to such obligations, often going to considerable effort and personal discomfort to meet them. A middleman, on the other hand, is used precisely to avoid the kind of delicate encounter described here. As a disinterested third party, he can be completely candid in his requests. However, for reasons of secrecy (usually when the request involves some potential competition or envy of other villagers, or perhaps some sharp-dealing) the use of a middleman may be inappropriate.

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

to be somewhat nervous. Like the conversational topics mentioned above, its purpose is to maintain social contact, but at a minimal substantive level.

Other uses of giggling are less consciously purposeful than the above. Perhaps the most frequent instance of this is when villagers are talking about or responding directly to an unfortunate situation: a flood destroying the rice crop, a friend or relative dying or being beaten up, a person committing suicide. Giggling under these circumstances seems to represent several related sentiments. On the one hand, it indicates a slight feeling of embarrassment over having discovered something or talked about something which would have been better left undiscovered and undiscussed. At the same time, it is an attempt to make light of the misfortune by suggesting that the speaker and those present should not be overly pained by what they are encountering. Giggling here serves very much the same kind of function as the phrase *maj pen raj* ("it is nothing") referred to earlier; it is a means of shrugging off and denying a feeling of distress. Finally, giggling often is also a kind of ironic commentary on the human situation—not in any abstract philosophical way, but in the sense that a tragedy is so often actually felt to be a comic exposure of human hopes and intentions. A little exchange between the writer and an elderly villager perhaps best illustrates this. During one of the two rainy seasons I spent in Thailand, the rains were especially heavy in the Central Plain and destroyed the rice crop of many Bang Chan farms. As might be expected, it was a topic of considerable discussion. Paddling down the canal one morning, we met a villager who was returning from inspecting his fields, and we stopped to chat. The discussion inevitably turned to the flood, and he told us, in a completely matter-of-fact way, that he had already lost about 50 percent of his crop. He then giggled nervously over what he had said, and followed it up with, "But that person over there has lost everything." His giggles then turned into laughter as he nodded his head in an attitude of pain. Months later, when things were considerably more comfortable for the villager (as it turned out, he had lost only about 5 percent of his crop) I recalled our meeting and asked him what he thought was so funny about the flood. He did not remember, but volunteered in a nice, didactic way: "When something like a flood happens, all you can do is laugh."

Giggling is also a favored mode of dealing with the countless situations that arise in daily life that are perceived by the villagers as potentially, or imminently, embarrassing. Here giggling is a substitute for an explanation of one's actions, particularly those that are considered annoying to others. Villagers who have missed an *important* appointment (lesser ones are missed with few qualms) will tend to giggle when they finally meet the person and there is the slightest indication of the latter's displeasure.

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

*156 villagers' concern is essentially self-referring in nature: it is both a manifestation and validation *to the self* that one is a fine, proper, and upstanding person; that to treat others well is to perform one's role as a civilized, meritorious person. This last term, "meritorious," was intentionally selected. It is meant to suggest that much of the villagers' politeness is consciously (although perhaps not explicitly) related to the notion of accumulating Buddhist merit, and that in being nice to others Bang Chaners are managing to fulfill, a little bit, what is to most of them the *raison d'être* of the human experience.

The Dynamics of Loose Structure

• 571 The foregoing discussion was concerned with the nature of some of the most frequently occurring forms of face-to-face contact in Bang Chan. It focused on manifestations of, and motives for, behavior when people *actually meet* and interact. However, human relationships involve considerably more than the forms and rituals of face-to-face interaction. They also include feelings, attitudes and behavior toward others once the interactive situation has been left behind; a readiness to become involved with others in the first instance; and a sense of social linkage, functional or sentimental, that ties people to one another over time. This last has reference to the system of rights, obligations, and responsibilities that form the substance of enduring relationships.

These latter considerations are perhaps the most difficult to talk about in Bang Chan because their most conspicuous expressions tend to be negative in nature; that is, empirically it often is considerably easier to point to cases where there are no enduring ties between individuals or where there is hesitation to become closely involved with others than it is to identify what links them together. There are a few relatively explicit means of linkage: the "dyadic contract" (to be discussed below); kinship ties, in many respects a special case of the dyadic contract; and on some occasions, certain cosmological considerations ("I owe him this because we were friends in earlier lives," "We love each other because we were born on the same day"). However, even these modes of linkage require continuous behavioral validation and are recognized as ultimately unreliable. A Bang Chaner who fails to fulfill his "contract" by refusing to return a favor would at very worst be considered selfish. Most villagers would not even bother to assess his actions, assuming that he must have had a good reason for them.

To a large extent, the descriptive problem encountered here is the result of certain methodological conventions. An investigator concerned with how human beings relate to each other inevitably, and not unreasonably,

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

tries to identify the bases of their contact. Having once identified these, he then tends to assume that not only the bases but the relationships themselves are relatively constant and reliable.[18] The relationship between Bang Chan employer and employee is an excellent example of the problem. An investigator concerned with specifying the bases of their relationship could readily point to two factors; contractual (in the strict meaning of the term) and sentimental. The former involves the exchange of a sum of money for labor fulfilled. The latter involves an array of behaviors expressive of the employer's concern for his retainer: feeding him well, not making him work too hard, treating him like a younger sibling or "adopted" child, recognizing his birthday, or buying him small gifts if possible. Interestingly, the subordinate's obligations to his superior are considerably less explicit and social psychologically less demanding: he must simply respect and obey him. However, as accurate as these specifications are, they say nothing about the reliability of the relationship. It may be broken off over matters that have nothing to do with how well each is fulfilling his interactive responsibilities. The employee may become bored; he may have a sudden desire to take a trip or go to Bangkok; if he is from a distant village, he may suddenly become homesick and just as suddenly leave. As indicated earlier, he will frequently do this without saying a word to the employer; his absence is sufficient to indicate the termination of the relationship.

Very often the breakdown of the relationship is short-lived. I recall my exasperation during the early stages of field work when right in the middle of an important interview, my field assistant would tell me—with absolutely no forewarning—that he had to be in Bangkok in an hour and a half, and would have to leave now. When I suggested that the interview first be completed, the reply, the first time this happened, was "No, I promised a friend I would meet him at the movies, and I have to go now." When asked why he made a movie date during working hours, he answered: "Well, this was the only time my friend could go." The straightforwardness of his response indicated that it was both futile and dangerous (he might never return from the movies) to ask why the friend could not go alone, what the real reason was for his sudden departure, or why he did not tell me beforehand so I could have made different plans. Pursuing such queries would have served only to annoy my assistant, rather than hold him; and from his own point of view, they were really not my business. This kind of behavior was neither idiosyncratic to this individual nor limited to movies. Later on, when other assistants asked for intermissions, the explanations

[18] Certain relationships are of course explicitly recognized as inconstant and unreliable. The relationship between appliance owner and repairman in our society, for example, has come to have these special attributes—not without strain and exasperation, but as part of the reality of the relationship.

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

given were equally oblique. Although I never really overcame my feeling of helplessness in dealing with such situations, I did manage over a period of time to communicate to those in my employ the appropriateness (at least regarding our own particular relationship) of giving me fair warning, *e.g.*, "Europeans are different in this way."

Again, there is nothing extraordinary or unique about personal desires and inclinations intruding on the stability of an interpersonal relationship. However, what is unique to Bang Chan and Thai culture in general is the frequency of such intrusions, the extent to which they take precedence over the responsibilities of the established relationship, and perhaps most important, their general expectability. No Bang Chaner is ever taken aback when another does not fulfill his assumptions about how that other will behave. Note that these intrusions may have little effect on the face-to-face contacts existing between people. My assistant's declaration that he was going to the movies was presented in a most affable way and in the other examples cited, where people were left in the lurch, there need not have been any contact whatsoever between the parties involved.

Reference was made to these modes of relationship in the section on Bang Chan social organization and kinship. However, they received their first formal, and perhaps most elegant, formulation in a now famous article entitled "Thailand—A Loosely Structured Social System," by the late John F. Embree (1950). Embree's application of the notion of "loose structure" was mainly descriptive rather than analytic; it was used to summarize a wide variety of empirical materials. Thus (182): "The first characteristic of Thai culture to strike an observer from the West, or from Japan or Vietnam is the individualistic behavior of the people. The longer one resides in Thailand the more one is struck by the almost determined lack of regularity, discipline, and regimentation in Thai life. In contrast to Japan, Thailand lacks neatness and discipline; in contrast to Americans, the Thai lack respect for administrative regularity and have no industrial time sense." After providing an extensive series of examples—on the lack of binding filial piety, on the tendency to permit a thief to steal from a neighbor's house without raising an alarm or attempting to stop him, on the capacity to delay and double-talk those with whom one has business dealings, Embree concludes (184): "The point here once more is that . . . while obligations are recognized, they are not allowed to burden one unduly. Such as are sanctioned are observed freely by the individual—he acts of his own will, not as a result of social pressure."

While Embree's formulation is by definition phrased in social structural terms, it inevitably directs our attention to an underlying motivational issue: the nature of the villagers' dispositions to conformity. Conformity to the expectations of others—whether such expectations are shared, comple-

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

mentary, or emergent—is of course a basic requisite of all effective[19] social action. It is perfectly clear, as was demonstrated in the earlier discussion, that Bang Chaners are highly motivated to conform while in the direct presence of others. Often there is over-conformity when in such situations villagers become overly solicitous to what they think are the needs of others. However, the hallmark of Thai social relations is that there never is any certainty that such face-to-face contacts will take place, or if they do take place, that the conformity which exists during the direct encounter will be sustained once the contact has ended. The overriding inclination of the Bang Chaner is to separate the encounter itself from that which precedes or follows it; psychologically, they are independent and unrelated experiences. The typical Bang Chaner excels at the art of indicating agreement with people—responsiveness, coöperativeness, and compliance with their verbal requests and orders—and then once the situation has been concluded, doing precisely what he wants, often the exact opposite of that to which he had agreed.[20]

Ordinarily, this is not intended as a form of duplicity. Villagers are quite sincere (and probably correct) when they say: "People are much happier when you agree with them and tell them what they want to hear." Too, the behavior is explained in part by the fact that most villagers feel they can change their plans and intentions with impunity at the slightest provocation. Unfortunately, the other persons involved may not be informed of the change until it actually occurs. A Bang Chan employee who

[19] The term "effective" is inserted here to acknowledge that social action is just as likely to be characterized by ambiguity, confusion, and misunderstanding—the absence of clear expectations—and that in some cases (for example, greeting rituals) it is oriented mainly to *discovering* patterns of expectations. Further, insofar as such action occurs through time, it is never completely free of a minimum of both ambiguity and certainty: the ambiguity of not being able to anticipate what might next occur; the certainty of knowing that what does emerge has *some* relationship to what has gone before.

[20] Bang Chan and Thai culture in general evidently are not the only places in Southeast Asia where one finds these modes of response. Addressing himself to a rather different issue, Geertz (1956: 155), writing about the social attitudes of Javanese peasants, notes: "Now, as in the past, the central government and the *prijaji* [aristocratic, learned, upper class] outlook which justifies it sits uneasily in the general social context of Javanese peasant society, with much less actual control over the behavior of the villager than it would seem at first glance to have. Without the intricate ties between the rural and urban gentry one finds, for example, in China, or without the deeply rooted clearly defined, land-rights-linked social code of reciprocal obligations of feudal Europe, the *prijaji* has always found outward submission, exaggerated respect, and placating excuses easier to obtain from the *abangan* [traditionally oriented peasants] than actual obedience." This passage, of course, was concerned with the nature of the Javanese authority system rather then with more generalized patterns of interpersonal response. Whether Javanese respond in the same way to fellow villagers and to other social equals is unclear. However, the stylistic similarities between Thai and Javanese peasants are striking.

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

A Bang Chan employee who walks out on his superior because he does not like the food he is served or a villager who agrees to lend a person money and then is not at home when the person calls for the loan can easily account for his actions by saying that circumstances had changed.

It must be noted, and this is crucial, that there is generally no animosity felt toward the employer with the unpalatable food, toward the fleeing[21] employee, or toward the unreliable creditor. Villagers are thoroughly conditioned to the possibility of such events and accept them simply as part of the inauspicious nature of life. That they are in fact considered inauspicious rather than results of the willful or malevolent intentions of others is not accidental. Bang Chaners faced with a breakdown in the fulfillment of commitments can of course point to the individual who directly caused it. But there is no satisfaction to be gained from this. The person who broke his obligation must have had his own good reason, and beyond this, there were probably other factors, unknown to both parties, that caused the breakdown. For most Bang Chaners, all human intentions are forever set within a framework of cosmic, and particularly moral, unpredictabilities.[22] If things do not work out the way one expects, it is most likely due to the inauspiciousness of the time, place, and persons involved. The proper time is particularly important. It is precisely for these reasons that the more important events in a person's life—marriage, trying to win a lottery or a maiden's heart, taking an important trip—are so often preceded by ceremonial attempts to decide the cosmologically auspicious conditions for effecting the event. These involve consultations with monks, shamans, and other religious practitioners, and highly ritualized forms are followed to select the appropriate conditions. (See Textor 1960 and 1962 for systematic discussions of the various kinds of problems and practices associated with this complex.) The kind of occurrences discussed above are not of this order of significance, but they do partake of the same cognitive assumptions that lead to such highly institutionalized practices. Thus, whereas most Occidentals would point exclusively to the actions of the other person as being both the necessary and sufficient cause of the interactional breakdown, Bang Chaners, who have considerably less confidence in human capacities, would really not be sure. To them, human volition represents only one of several indeterminate and uncontrollable factors giving rise to events. Who knows what accident, change of heart, sudden windfall—particularly one occasioned by something done by one of the parties several lives earlier—might intervene to alter what had originally been planned and agreed upon?

[21] This is just the term that villagers, with their wonderful sense of hyperbole, apply to such cases. The original Thai word is *nii*.

[22] I am indebted to L. M. Hanks, Jr., for suggesting this line of thought.

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

These assumptions about the indeterminate nature of the universe and human actions are so integral to the villagers' cognitive orientations that Bang Chaners often hesitate to make even the most elementary kinds of prediction. Thus, in asking a village lad how he felt about his older brother's forthcoming ordination, I was told, "I don't know." The tone of his reply indicated that he was not evading the question, so I pursued the matter further: "Well, do you feel happy about it? Do you wish you were being ordained together with him?" He answered: "The ordination is not for another three days. I do not know how I will feel at that time. But when that time comes I will know." In another case, I was going up the canal with a villager to attend a "Kathin" being held at the monastery. (A "Kathin" is a fiesta-like merit making ceremony sponsored by a person or group of persons from outside the village at which new robes are presented to the monastery monks. It involves the sponsors, their local hosts, and all villagers who wish to attend.) Although not necessarily an annual event, "Kathins" are held often enough at Monastery Bang Chan so that this villager, who was also a member of the monastery lay committee, was thoroughly familiar with every aspect of them. Simply to make conversation, I asked him: "What is the 'Kathin' going to be like today?" to which he replied, "I do not know. I have not been to the monastery yet today." Assuming that his past experience with "Kathins" provided him with some knowledge of the goings-on, I went on: "Well, do you think there will be many people?" His answer: "I do not know. You never know what a situation is like until you meet it. I have not met this one yet today."

The point of these various illustrations is that they represent a psychological universe of uncertainty and unpredictability. And in this kind of universe—where one hesitates to build up sharply defined expectations and where one is forever aware of the mutability and frailty of the environment—it is not unusual that there should also be a high tolerance for interpersonal nonconformity. What the actual limits are, theoretical or empirical, to this tendency to nonconformity are uncertain. Much of the nonconformity is undoubtedly made possible, in the first instance, by the sociologically simple and relatively undifferentiated nature of Bang Chan society; that is, the actual number of functionally specific tasks and roles—those that require special competencies—are few, and any number of different individuals can perform them. Thus, when a Bang Chan employee walks out on his boss or when a wife walks out on her husband, their actions do not from a functional point of view disable the system. Since the requirements of the role of house servant or farmhand are characteristically simple and understood by all, the departing employee can usually be replaced by another individual. Similarly, since any adult—aunt, grandparents, older sibling—can and often does rear another's children, and

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

• 571 *156 since there is always sufficient fish in the canal for an abandoned spouse to feed himself,[23] the departure of a wife or husband need not, from a functional point of view and the point of view of most villagers, work any great hardship on the individuals involved. This suggests that not all social systems are equally demanding in their functional requirements for people to conform. The importance of this point is taken up in the final chapter.

It is recognized, of course, that the sociological simplicity of Bang Chan represents a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for the nonconformity found in the community. There undoubtedly are many cultures which are functionally and sociologically less complex than Bang Chan but where culturally defined requirements for interpersonal conformity are considerably greater. I would suggest that the loosely structured nature of relationships in Bang Chan is due primarily to psychological and philosophical ("world view") factors and is *permitted* expression by the relatively undifferentiated social system. A more complex, highly differentiated social system, one whose functioning is completely dependent on the technical competencies of its members and on their meeting each other's expectations (a factory system, for example) obviously could not afford this luxury.

It might be noted that, in the example cited earlier regarding the movie-going field assistants, one of the reasons for my consternation (over and above my being an American) was the fact that these persons were highly trained individuals who could not be easily replaced. Their temporary departures were strain enough; had the departures been permanent, it would at that point have paralyzed the research. In this respect, their behavior was typically Thai, but the situation in which they found themselves was not.[24]

The ultimate psychological sources of the villagers' tendency toward loosely structured relationships are not easily determined. (The indeterminacy here is inevitable. It derives from the impossibility of ever being certain whether the loose relationships are actually consequences or causes of these other factors, or whether both are expressions of a single, under-

[562] [23] This is just what one informant, a female, said when her husband left her. The sociological simplicity of Bang Chan is also supported by the slight differentiation that villagers make between the adult roles of the two sexes. In contrast to all other known cultures, in Thailand both men and women may serve as midwives and do plowing. They both own and operate farms, inherit property equally, share equally in the property brought to a marriage and divide it equally in case of divorce. It is not uncommon to find men tending babies while women are off on a business deal; nor is it unusual, as indicated earlier, to see women paddling right along with men as crew members in a boat race. (See Sharp *et al.* 1953 for an amplification of this point.)

[24] In fact, this event is a perfect illustration in microcosm of what was referred to in the introduction, following Inkeles and Levinson, as "personality-institutional noncongruence."

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

lying configuration.) However, from the point of view of their etiology in the individual, it is clear that the villagers' tendencies toward loose relationships are related to early childhood experiences. A second source is their philosophical notions concerning the nature of the individual. These notions are largely cultural derivatives of Buddhist doctrine, although at the behavioral level they function simply as unstated premises which guide and tacitly define behavior.[28]

Reference was made earlier to the basic assumptions governing the socialization of the Bang Chan child. When the child enters the world of human beings, he is already a partially formed and psychologically independent individual, with his own *ʔupanidsaj* (ingrained character) and *khwaan* (soul-stuff), not to mention his stock of accumulated merit and demerit from countless previous lives which predetermines his character. The effect of these definitions is not only to award to the child a sense of psychic individuality that is partially[29] independent of any social environment to which he is exposed, but to assign to him a fundamental sense of psychological equality. We are not speaking here of *social* equality. The

[28] From a strict analytic point of view, it would probably be best to consider Buddhist doctrine as an abstract, codified representation of these premises rather than consider the premises as explicit, logically coherent deductions from Buddhist doctrine. To be sure, many Bang Chaners often explain and justify their actions by pointing directly to Buddhist doctrine, sometimes applying its tenets correctly, and sometimes not. But for most, Buddhism is a diffuse, ubiquitous *Weltanschauung*, the precise effects and applications of which the villagers are typically unconscious. It would probably not be incorrect to think of most religious "traditions," particularly the "Great" codified ones, as functioning in this way.

[29] The term "partially" is inserted here to indicate that despite these ontological notions, few villagers, as J. R. Hanks (1959) points out, ever consider "any human child so marvelously endowed . . . from previous existences that training is unnecessary." The child's *ʔupanidsaj*, *khwaan*, merit and demerit, as well as his *winjaan* (psychological motive power), *caj* (heart), and *phrooměʔkhìd* ("the lines of his destiny as established by Brahma") are all crucial predeterminants of his character. But few Bang Chaners ever think of a person's character as due solely to the uncontrolled emergence of these pre-natal forces. Rather, they represent the basic psychological raw material with which parents and other socializing agents must work, and set the limits of these agents' enculturating efforts. What is important is that the limits—the "degrees of freedom" permitted the parents—tend to be narrowly defined. Intensive probing of informants indicates that there is no general agreement on whether these cosmological forces are more or less influential than parental training in shaping a child, although they tend to be invoked more frequently as explanations of negative characteristics and of unusual happenings, positive as well as negative, in the lives of individuals. Also, villagers are inclined to think of them as the reasons behind *particular* characteristics and events, assigning to parental training a more diffuse influence in the development of the child. Thus, when asked why a particular individual grew up to be a *nagklaeng* (an aggressive, daring, sometimes bullying type of person) and how one of their fellow Bang Chaners had grown up to become an admiral in the Thai Navy, informants attributed the character and success of these individuals respectively to their *ʔupanidsaj* and *kam*. (*Kam*, the Thai derivative of *karma*, is the proportion of merit to demerit that a person may have at any particular moment in

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

858 828 child is clearly a social inferior, and is due all the prerogatives of his position: he is to be dealt with gently, kindly, and benevolently, with sympathetic regard for his incompetence; correlatively, he must be taught to express deference and obedience to superiors. Rather, the equality awarded the child results from the recognition that in the workings of the cosmic scale it is impossible to ascertain what the child could once have been or eventually will become, and he, like any soul, is always *potentially* of the same value as any other person. It is precisely for this reason that most Bang Chaners, if they mention it at all, are only mildly pleased rather than particularly proud that one of their own grew up to become an admiral in the Thai Navy. It comes as no great surprise that such a thing can happen. To them, it is no more unusual than that the prime minister himself should be a person who was born and reared in a village. (By the same token, the peasant background of these two individuals creates no special sense of personal identification with them on the part of the villagers. They are perceived simply as two unique *individuals*, their peasant roots being viewed as only one of the literally countless factors that made them what they are today.)[11] To a large extent, the equality of the child derives from the premise that he is not so much a child as he is a human being who happens to be at a particular stage in his ontological

---

time). When probed further and asked if their parents' training may have had any influence on these individuals, they replied "yes" and "maybe" in the case of the admiral, but disavowed all parental influence in the case of the *nagkleeng*. A few said that the *nagkleeng* became that way because of bad friends.

[115] One villager, phrasing his comment as a personal conjecture, volunteered that the notion of parents being the major influence on a child's character is a "modern" idea. Another informant, the wife of a school teacher and well versed in her husband's teaching training manual (prepared in Bangkok by Western-trained educators) argued that a person's character is dependent "mostly on the influence of the home and school." However, since on other occasions she complained to me that one of her sons "does not have an *?upanidsaj* for studying, and there is nothing a parent can do but let the child have his own way," it would suggest that her commitment to the pronouncements of her husband's mentors was not too well internalized.

To avoid confusion, it might be added that from a historical point of view only one of the above cosmological forces (*kam*) is strictly Buddhistic in origin. The others are either Brahmanic (*khwaan* and *phroomlʔkhid*) or traditionally Thai (*?upanidsaj*, *wisjaan*, and *caj*). Of all the terms, *kam* and *?upanidsaj* are the ones most frequently referred to when discussing an individual's character.

[11] [565] [571] [554] It is precisely for this reason, as I indicated in an earlier writing on Thai social structure (see Sharp *et al.* 1956: 163) that Thai society "cannot be said to have a class system in the classical European sense of the term." People identify with others as individuals, not as representatives of social classes.

The very fact that individual peasant boys can climb the social ladder to attain some of the highest social positions of the land, without it even being considered particularly noteworthy, attests to the fundamental equalitarian nature of the ideas underlying the Thai social system despite the obvious emphasis given to status and hierarchy in individual face-to-face relationships.

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

593 155 *156 [125] None of the above is meant to imply that 79 percent of the adults of Bang Chan would in fact give away their children. But the relatively high frequency of agreement they exhibited in admitting to such a possibility and the fact that as many as 65 percent agreed that it was either good or justifiable reveals something of the psychological environment within which the Bang Chan child is reared and where he learns his basic orientations toward other persons. The responses to this single stimulus must of course be seen in the context of the more naturalistic, behavioral materials presented earlier. The point of all these illustrations, however, is that they indicate there is nothing sacrosanct about any human tie in Bang Chan, even that which exists between parent and child. If necessity or personal predilection requires, then this tie too may be broken. What is perhaps most significant here, from a developmental point of view, is that the breaking of the tie always exists as a realistic potentiality in the life of the child. Reared in an environment where he learns that no human tie need be permanent or sustaining, the developing child inevitably takes on some of these same patterns of expectation in his own dealings with others. Thus the villager who abandons his spouse or the employee who with little warning leaves his employer are acting in terms of patterns the prototypes of which they either actually experienced as children or came to expect as part of the realities of interpersonal relations in Bang Chan.

593 155 *156 • 591

779 *156 The second major source of the villagers' loose relationships lacks the developmental reference of the above. To a certain extent it is not even social relational in nature, although our concern with it stems from its having crucial consequences to the social orientations of individuals. I am referring here to the Buddhist emphasis on the primacy of individual action and individual responsibility. Without going into a lengthy discussion of the subtleties of Buddhist doctrine, it is imperative to point out that the principal tenet of Hinayana Buddhism is the complete psychological freedom, isolation, and responsibility of every person. This is not the Occidental idea of "free will," but rather the notion that every person is a free agent, responsible only to and for himself, and that he inevitably reaps the fruits of his own conduct. Buddhist canonical literature is replete with references stressing the centrality of this doctrine. The last words of the Lord Buddha before he left this world to achieve the sublime state of *nibphaan* (nirvana) are said to have been: "Work out your own salvation with diligence." A frequently quoted passage of the *Dhamapada* reads: "By oneself is evil done; By oneself one suffers; By oneself evil is left undone; By oneself one is purified." The whole complex cosmology relating to the accumulation of merit and demerit is phrased in terms of the individual's lonely journey through cycles of interminable existences working out his own moral destiny. Who his progenitors were, what kind of environment he was born

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

primitive categories into which people code their experience. From a psychodynamic point of view, the predicates do not *require* codification; people think and act in terms of "primitive" (tacit, axiomatic) categories many of which are never explicated in the propositions of their formal religious, ethnophilosophical, or mythological systems. Why certain categories are selected for codification and others are not is beyond the scope of this book. However, it is clear that a major function of Buddhist thought—like that of any articulate symbolic or ideological system—is to *objectify* and *clarify* some of the more important experiential assumptions of its adherents. This is the cognitive essence of all belief systems. As a belief system, Buddhist doctrine also takes on a special value of its own. This is in fact its second major function; that is, the tenets of Buddhism not only serve to objectify through philosophical elaboration that which is already accepted but also to act as standards in assessing the value, propriety, and significance of human actions. In this sense, Buddhism (again like any coherent ideological system) provides a corpus of knowledge for rationalizing and *sanctioning* certain types of behavior and for disapproving of others. The very belief system that codifies aspects of reality for its adherents assumes the normative function of reinforcing and promoting those activities that are in conformity with it. This is the motivational essence of all belief systems. Needless to say, we are speaking here of activities that are subjectively felt to be valuable and proper, irrespective of the social psychological dysfunctions that may follow from them. Thus, returning to our major theme, most villagers would agree that the Bang Chaner who without saying a word leaves his spouse in order to avoid an embarrassing or rancorous confrontation over some difficulty is behaving in a manner thoroughly consonant with "doing evil by himself; suffering by himself; leaving evil undone by himself; and becoming purified by himself." How the wife responds to his actions is her problem. Her *kam* may well have been the reason for this happening to her. (Note that I say ". . . for this happening to her," *not* ". . . for his doing this to her." This is the typical village way of perceiving such events. Again, the interactional dimension is secondary: it is what happens *to* individuals, not what happens *between* them, that counts.) How *explicitly* villagers would apply Buddhist doctrine to this particular situation is problematic. Applications of Buddhist thought usually emerge only after villagers have been asked to think actively about and articulate justifications for the actions of people. Their comments are typically *post hoc* explanations that appear only when there is a necessity either to understand or ethically evaluate an individual's actions.

The above discussion was concerned with detailing some of the sources and supports of the loosely structured relationships that are found in Bang

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

Chan. However, there remains the crucial question of how villagers manage to develop the long-term relationships that they do have, for despite the inevitable unpredictability of all human contacts, most Bang Chaners do live together in family units for more or less sustained periods of time, fathers do save for years in order to give their sons respectable ordinations into the monkhood, relatives and friends who have not seen each other since childhood do assemble for the cremation of a late kinsman or mutual friend, and mature adults do continue to feel a profound sense of respect and obligation to individuals who were their teachers when they were youngsters. What are the bases and rewards for these enduring interpersonal commitments?

The immediate rewards for these commitments are, on the one hand, quite apparent. They involve such things as the simple, unrationalized kind of love found among any group of kin or close friends. In the case of the ordination and cremation, there is the reward of making merit, not only for the son and the departed soul, but for all those who sponsor and participate in the ceremonials. The satisfactions gained from increasing one's social prestige by putting on an ostentatious ceremonial are not to be overlooked either. At a more subtle level in the case of the respectful student, the reward is gained from knowing that one is behaving in a proper and courteous way toward one's *aacaan* (in its social psychological connotations, similar to the Indian term *guru*) and is thus upholding established normative patterns. The rewards of maintaining the rituals of the moral order are not to be glossed over for Bang Chaners, like most Siamese, are a deeply ethical people. This is not meant as an evaluation of their behavior or as a statement of their capacity to conform to their ethical prescriptions, but simply as a statement of their preoccupation with ethical concerns. The rewards of *feeling* (genuinely or self-deceptively) that one has behaved in an ethically and ritualistically prescribed way are among the most satisfying of sentiments, although as indicated in the discussion of "social cosmetics," villagers often use the rituals of ethical behavior as substitutes for more demanding interpersonal involvements. Indeed, the great emphasis given to the performance of ethical rituals (speaking in soft and gentle words, honoring one's mentors) helps perpetuate the loosely structured relationships found in the community in that conformity to these rituals is perceived by many as comprising the fulfillment of their interpersonal obligations. Beyond this they are free to pursue their own interests. To a large extent the ritualistic forms serve as a comforting psychological justification for the pursuit of individualistic concerns, *i.e.*, "But I otherwise treat others so nicely." [20] This is not the result of conscious

[20] In one of his more recent and typically penetrating works, Goffman (1963) coins the terms "Involvement Shields," "Main Involvements," and "Subordinate

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

1923–1924], translated by Cunnison) and Homans (1961) have argued, that human relationships everywhere are based on just such a consideration, usually concealed by ethically palatable amenities (such as in American culture, from which most of Homans' empirical materials come). However, what is so intriguing about the Thai case is that *quid pro quo* factors are forever in mind as justifications and explanations of why people relate to one another. Although villagers, because they are such polite people, rarely say to others, "I am helping you because I know the day will come when I need your help," or "Do this for me because you owe me a favor," they do use such arguments *to explain* the basis of their ties: "Of all my friends I love Lek the most because she has done me the most favors (*bunkhuns*)"; "The purpose of marriage is to have a companion who will take care of you when you get sick"; "Of all my daughters, the one who gives me the greatest pleasure is the one who sells things. . . . When she gets money she gives it to me"; "Friends are very useful because it means that you have people who will do you favors. And when they need help, you will take care of them. This is love." [21]

One of the finest discussions of the nature of reciprocal obligations appears in a recent paper by George M. Foster (1961) that deals not with a Thai community, but with the Mexican village of Tzintzuntzan. Foster outlines in his paper the notion of the "dyadic contract" which he presents as a model for the social structure of Tzintzuntzan. Or, more precisely: "Specifically, I suggest a model . . . to reconcile the institutionalized roles which can be recognized and described in the community with the underlying principle which gives the social system coherence." Foster's focus thus differs somewhat from our psychological emphasis. However, his abstract statement of the "dyadic contract" provides such an excellent summation of the major factor making for enduring social relationships in Bang Chan that it merits quoting in detail here. There are of course inevitable differences in cultural content between the two communities and the fact that

[21] Such explanations are not unique to Bang Chan. In his description of the Thai-Lue village of Ban Phaed in Northern Thailand, Moerman (1962) observes: "The society of Ban Phaed operates in terms of something got for every something given. This is not merely an analytic device which permits a predictive, if crass, view of any human society. It is the way in which villagers explain and evaluate their own behavior. Favor for favor, visit for visit, meal for meal, one should return what he receives. 'We help our kinsmen because they help us. If a kinsman however close didn't help me, I wouldn't help him.' 'We care for our children when they are young; they will care for us when we are old.' Actions which we would justify in terms of compassion, generosity, public-spirit, patriotism, pride in a job well done, the Lue villager speaks of in terms of reciprocal, short-term self-interest. Their actions are no more selfish than ours. Far from it. But the moral rhetoric of a Lue villager is different from our own. In politics, economics, family life, and religion it focuses on something got for something given."

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

114 status differences and the looseness of social ties loom considerably in Bang
* 156 Chan probably makes for some other structural variations.[22] However, as
171 stated below, Foster's formulation applies almost perfectly to Bang Chan
• 571 (1173-1176):

> The model appears to account for the nature of interaction between people of the same socio-economic status, between people of different statuses, between fellow villagers, between villagers and outsiders, and perhaps between man and supernatural beings as well. Although my analysis deals only with Tzintzuntzan, I think the model will prove useful for other societies with similar structural features . . .
>
> Briefly it is hypothesized that every adult organizes his social contacts . . . by means of a special form of contractual relationship. These contracts are informal, or implicit, since they lack ritual or legal basis. [This is not completely true for Bang Chan. There is, for example, a special "Teachers' Day," sanctioned by the national government, set aside for honoring teachers, and thus providing ritualistic reinforcement to the contract.] They are not based on any idea of law, and they are unenforceable through authority; *they exist only at the pleasure of the contractants.* The contracts are dyadic in that they occur only between two people; three or more individuals are not brought together. The contracts are noncorporate, since social units such as villages, *barrios,* or extended families cannot truly be said to enter contractual relations with other families, although spouses often honor the obligations inherent in each other's contracts.
>
> The implicit dyadic contract is made between members of a family as close as siblings [and in Bang Chan, as close as husband and wife, and parents and children] . . . ; and it unites neighbors and friends. Contracts are found between social and economic equals within Tzintzuntzan or with similar people in other communities. And they are found between people (or beings) of different status and category, as on those few occasions when outside political leaders or economic patrons have ties with villagers and when a villager invokes the aid of the
[776] Virgin Mary or a saint. [In Bang Chan, a functional equivalent of the
[782] latter would be when villagers propitiate the *caw,* or Spirit Lord,
[778] who resides in the *San Phra Phuum,* or house of the Guardian Spirit of the home. This is a replica of a house, about the size of a bird cage,
[782] located in every house lot in Bang Chan. The offering of rice and flowers to the *caw* is explicitly a form of payment to him for the use

[22] A second paper on Tzintzuntzan (Foster 1963) indicates that there are some crucial motivational differences as well, viz., Bang Chaners enter into dyadic contracts with a much greater sense of freedom than do Tzintzuntzeños. Their attitude is both more cavalier and cold-blooded than the Mexican peasant who feels that if he is to exist, he has no choice but to enter into these contracts. The Bang Chaner is animated by a sense of personal advantage; the Tzintzuntzeño by a sense of passive participation in a system he cannot change.

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

of the land upon which the human home is built. In effect, humans have temporarily "rented" the land from him.]

. . . [The] contract implies and is validated by reciprocal obligations . . . [In] its totality the system of complementary reciprocity validates, maintains, and gives substance to the implicit contractual networks. The symbolic meaning of exchanges (as contrasted to economic and other functions) is accepted without question by all villagers: as long as a person continues to give to and receive from a partner, he is assured that the particular relationship is in good order. *When an exchange pattern between two people terminates, it is overt evidence to both that the contract is dead,* regardless of the formal institutional ties or the religious validation which may, in theory, continue to bind the participants. [Italics added.]

In anthropological analysis it is customary first to seek and attempt to identify the factors which link human beings together rather than those which keep them apart. This is so much a part of our professional tradition—in effect, one of our "primitive predicates"—that we tend to gloss over the question of the extent to which people must have enduring interpersonal commitments. This question has not been pursued in precise detail in our discussion. However, the realities of Bang Chan social behavior are so weighted in the direction of atomistic and essentially non-relational considerations that any coherent discussion of them should be organized in approximately equivalent terms. It is for this reason that the bulk of our presentation has focused on the individualistic nature of the villagers and that the factors accounting for interpersonal linkage were left to the end. It is hoped that such an organization has accurately reflected the tone and quality of Bang Chan social life as it is encountered and felt by an outside observer trying to understand its meaning to those who experience it.

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

*125 *128 152 *156 fundamental security about their own *psychological* worth. This is undoubtedly abetted by the fact that the modes of social interaction in Bang Chan do not demand too much from the individual, as well as the fact that the individual, with his profound sense of free choice, often ignores or isolates himself from the impingements of others. (That a stance of psychic isolation is not necessarily maladaptive will be discussed in the final chapter.) When asked how they would react to frightening or worrisome situations, most villagers respond in terms of maintaining their inner psychic stability and in terms of accepting and tolerating these familiar psychic pressures. Their responses are non-constructive, but are highly congruent with their passive and secure orientations to the world. Their responses to "anxiety" tend toward psychological "unimodality" at an interpretive level, although in the last two cases the descriptive similarity of the responses first suggest a bi-modal distribution.

Aggression: Causes and Reactions

121 152 Analyzing "aggression" in Bang Chan is very much like analyzing "sex" in contemporary American culture. The category represents at one and the same time one of the most obvious and one of the most convoluted areas of the villagers' psychological lives.

152 *156 571 The most obvious fact about aggression in Bang Chan is that villagers cannot tolerate its spontaneous, direct expression in face-to-face relationships. This is demonstrated not only by the general absence of overt aggression in such relationships but by the elaborate array of devices that villagers use to control its expression: giggling when making or receiving an untoward request, using a go-between to soften the demand of an interpersonal lien, leaving the field at the slightest hint of provocation (whether the provocation is intended or not), as well as the more general use of flattery, comedy, and self-effacement (*kreeŋcaj*). The repeated use of these devices as well as the villagers' evaluations of "people who never show their feelings" (see tables 16 and 17) reveal their sensitivity to aggression as a latent, but intrinsic, attribute of most social encounters. In fact, their evaluations of people who inhibit their feelings—or their *assumptions* about the inherently hostile nature of such feelings—suggest that their recognition of the potentiality of aggression (whether in themselves or others) is quite conscious.

The net result of these orientations is to give face-to-face contacts an aura of surface pleasantness, but at the same time a high degree of brittleness. Over and over again, villagers indicate that they prefer not to have any relationship at all than to have one that is even tinged with hostility.

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

Thus, in explaining why he loves one of his closest friends, a villager says:

> We love each other because we never contradict each other or disagree. That is why we love each other. If we disagreed, there would be no love. [Investigator: "It is normal sometimes even for close friends to disagree. About what kind of things do you and your close friend disagree?"] We never disagree. Only people who are drunkards and take opium disagree. That is why our friendship has lasted so long. [Investigator: "What would happen if you disagreed?"] We would not love each other, and maybe he would take revenge on me.

In another place, this same informant says of his relationship with his wife: "My wife and I never quarrel. If we quarreled, we would have to separate. There would be nothing to divide—except the children." As indicated earlier, many villagers, fearing the volatility of a quarrel, actually do separate, often even before the dispute gets going. Similarly, individuals, particularly if they are in subordinate positions, hesitate even to approach others lest they stimulate, let alone elicit, anger. Villagers will hesitate to approach others even if they are not the object, but simply a possible catalyst, of another's potential aggression: witness the cases of the land sale deal and the broken noria cited earlier. Note that in these cases it is not manifest aggression but merely the anticipation of it that inhibits villagers from initiating or maintaining interpersonal involvements.

Although villagers decline to express or to be exposed to direct aggression, they do have several indirect, if somewhat more complicated, ways of venting these feelings. Of these, the simplest is to gossip nastily *about* people. The frequency of this characteristic peasant activity is considerable in the village: in fact, an uncharitable observer might, on the basis of Bang Chan, just as readily entitle a book about Thailand *Land of Gossip* as *Land of Smiles*. However, the very frequency of gossip seems to mitigate its intensity or effect. Villagers are so accustomed to it that it is almost a *way* of talking, a style of speech. And as is the case with much village speech, villagers listen to, but do not necessarily believe, the nasty things one person might say about another. Also, excepting those cases where a person's complaints are either realistic or justifiable, people are just as likely to listen to an individual's gossip for what it says about him as for what it says about the person whom he is criticizing. None of this is to suggest that the person gossiping does not attain release, or that the person about whom he is gossiping, *if* he found out, would not be hurt or peeved. Rather, it is the situation in which the hostility is expressed that mitigates its effect.

Less frequent and more painful than the above are the formal, almost

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

152 571 ritualized, ways of expressing hostility. What is significant about these particular procedures is that their very formalism serves to keep the aggression controlled and within bounds. Thus, everybody knows precisely how to behave when a buffalo disappears in the middle of the night and an intermediary arrives the next day to arrange the price for its return. Similarly, the aggressor, his victim, and everyone else present knows what is meant when someone calls a dog by the name of a person who is within hearing range and claims it was simply a slip of the tongue. The victim might respond by stealing his antagonist's boat and returning it a few weeks later, after his adversary has suffered sufficient anxiety. Note that in all these cases a face-to-face confrontation is either avoided or concealed.

152 571 754 Related to the above is the use of magical aggression. Textor (1960) points out that magical aggression—from one *person* to another *person*—is on the wane in Bang Chan. Also, it is clear from his exhaustive inventory of the magical practices in the village that interpersonal aggression has a very minor part in what is otherwise an extremely elaborate belief and ritual system: there are no more than three or four supernatural "objects," out of more than one hundred and seventy, that even suggest witchcraft, and although these objects are considered highly potent, they are rarely used. Even in the most extreme case—a young man using the oil from the chin of a corpse to induce hysteria in a maiden who has rebuffed his advances[9]—the victim is held partially responsible for having succumbed to the magic, a consideration that diminishes the "magical" implications of the ritual.[10]

152 762 Finally, a word should be said about the most convoluted way of expressing aggression. This is suicide, a procedure which, obviously, is applicable to only a small number of people. Nevertheless, during the relatively brief period that I was in the field, three Bang Chaners (out of a population of 1,771) attempted to do away with themselves by hanging. They always selected a conspicuous place (a tree on the Minburi highway or over the main canal) and were always unsuccessful. The aggression here is convoluted not only because it is turned inward, but also because it is

[9] This blending of sex and aggression does not have the same meaning in Bang Chan as it has in the West. Although the young man is concerned with punishing the girl for not responding to him, he is more concerned with breaking down her defenses and equilibrium, the very factors which denied him access. In English terminology, he wants to "unhinge" her, with all the duality that such symbolism might imply.

[10] While magical aggression between people is relatively minor, magical means of averting aggression by non-human forces is not. In fact, the largest number of magical practices in Bang Chan relate to protecting the health and welfare of the organism from malevolent spirits, accidents, and dangerous animals. These data, of course, are quite consistent with the SCT data on "anxiety," presented in the preceding section. [789]

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bang Chan

the part of older people.[12] Particularly obvious is the absence of any reference to accumulating Buddhist merit. Neither is there any reference to the pleasures derived from dealing happily or enjoyably with other people. The closest we get to this is with the responses of two informants who are concerned mainly with the welfare of their children, and who speak in terms of "inspiring respect" in their children or assuming the role of "doctor" who, either by his knowledge (in case the children are ill) or wealth, could take care of them. Given all the conceivable things that villagers might wish to be—fanciful, real, personal, social, of this world, and of any world—the dominant wish is to have status, wealth, and respectability within their prevailing peasant context.

The next item, *"Most of all he wants to . . ."* is essentially a confirmation of the above findings. However, perhaps because of the syntax of the Thai version of the item and the inclusion of the word, "most" (*"The thing which raw wants the most is* (*namely*) . . .") the responses assume a considerably more extreme and "unimodal" form. The overwhelming majority of the informants, 77 percent, want only one thing: money. A few of them say that they want what are essentially cultural variations of money: property, rice fields, land, cattle, and jewelry. Several of them almost wax purple about the significance of money in their lives: *"The thing which raw wants the most is* (*namely*) . . . have money and gold, because money can help us all the time. Whatever one wishes to have, one can use money to buy it all. Even when one wants a wife, if one has a lot of money one can have anyone's daughter"; ". . . have money. Money is better than anything else. It is only the moon and stars that money cannot buy"; ". . . to have money. She wants money very much because when she lacks other things she can find something to take their place, but when she lacks money she is most unhappy"; ". . . have wealth because everything else comes after that." These responses, of course, explicate the major function of money. They indicate that money is not an end in itself, but a means by which to achieve some of the other life goals appearing here.

The minority responses to this item are in no case held by more than four individuals. Four villagers do give religious responses, saying that what they want most is to accumulate merit (one mentions both merit and money); three refer to maintaining the welfare of their families (one of them merging money and succorance by saying that he wants enough money to provide for his family); and four say that they want happiness (again, two of them linking money and happiness together).

---

[12] There is nothing in the grammatical-semantic structure of the Thai version of this item inhibiting a religiously oriented response. The Thai cognate for the verb "to be" here is *"pen,"* which could easily result in a response such as ". . . *pen khon thii mii bun,"* or ". . . a person who has merit." This would be the most obvious "religious" completion under the circumstances.